

Farm Service Agency, USDA

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and lamb operations to reestablish their purchasing power in connection with the normal production of sheep and lambs for domestic consumption and boost the long-term development and growth of sheep and lamb production in the United States.

(b) Under and subject to this part, FSA will provide with respect to sheep and lamb operations: Year 1 payments in which sheep and lamb operations will receive payments for, during the time period encompassing Year 1 as defined in § 784.3, purchasing eligible rams for breeding, enrolling their herd in a sheep improvement program, and for making improvements to their production facilities; Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 payments for marketings of eligible slaughter lambs or feeder lambs during the period encompassing those time periods; and Year 3 and Year 4 payments for retaining or purchasing ewe lambs for breeding stock to replenish the lamb inventory during the period encompassing those time periods. Unless otherwise determined by the agency in accordance with the provisions of this part, the amount that may be expended under this part shall not exceed \$67.7 million. Claims that exceed that amount will be prorated in accordance with the provisions for proration that are contained in this part.

(c) To be eligible for any payments under this part, the sheep and lamb operation must be engaged in the business of producing and marketing agricultural products at the time of filing the application.

§ 784.2 Administration.

This part shall be administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) under the general direction and supervision of the Administrator, FSA, or his designee and the employees of the Agency.

§ 784.3 Definitions.

The definitions set forth in this section shall be applicable for all purposes of administering the Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program established by this part.

Agricultural Marketing Service or AMS means the Agricultural Marketing Service of the Department.

Application means the Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program Application, Forms FSA-382 and FSA-383.

Average Choice Confirmation means a muscling score of that designation assigned in accordance with official USDA standards and procedures.

Department means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Eligible lambs means feeder lambs and slaughter lambs during Year 2 through Year 4 and also ewe lambs during Year 3 through Year 4.

Ewe lamb means a female lamb no more than 18 months of age that has not produced an offspring.

Farm Service Agency or FSA means the Farm Service Agency of the Department.

Feeder lamb means a ewe or wether of less than one year of age that when sold is intended to be further fed a high protein diet or other appropriate diet to reach an acceptable slaughter market weight.

Foot rot means an infectious, contagious disease of sheep that causes severe lameness and economic loss from decreased flock production.

Lambing cycle means the period of time from birth to weaning.

Parrot mouth means a genetic defect resulting in the failure of the incisor teeth to meet the dental pad correctly.

Person means any individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, estate, trust, association, cooperative, or other business enterprise or other legal entity who is, or whose members are, a citizen or citizens of, or legal resident alien or aliens in the United States.

Secretary means the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture or any other officer or employee of the Department who has been delegated the authority to act in the Secretary's stead with respect to the program established in this part.

Sheep and lamb operation means any self-contained, separate enterprise operated as an independent unit exclusively within the United States in which a person or group of persons raise sheep and/or lambs.

Sheep improvement program means the "National Sheep Improvement Program" operated by the American Sheep Industry Association or other similar

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program for herd improvement approved by the FSA with respect to payments under this part.

Slaughter lamb means a lamb that is sold for immediate slaughter.

United States means the 50 States of the United States of America, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

USDA Choice, USDA Prime, USDA Yield Grade 2 mean, respectively, the classifications for lamb carcasses so designated under the Official United States Standards for Grades of Lamb, Yearling, Mutton, and Mutton Carcasses promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (60 Stat. 1087; 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) and related authorities.

Year 1 means the period of time beginning July 22, 1999, and ending September 30, 2000.

Year 2 means the period of time beginning August 1, 2000, and ending July 31, 2001.

Year 3 means the period of time beginning August 1, 2001, and ending July 31, 2002.

Year 4 means the period of time beginning August 1, 2002, and ending July 31, 2003.

§ 784.4 Year 1 time and method for application.

(a) A request for Year 1 benefits under this part must be submitted on a Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program Payment Application. The form may be obtained from and must be submitted to the FSA county office serving the county where the sheep and lamb operation is located. The completed form must be received by the FSA county office by the close of business on October 13, 2000. Applications not received by the close of business on October 13, 2000, will be returned as not having been timely filed and the sheep and lamb operation filing the application will not be eligible for benefits under this program.

(b) The sheep and lamb operation requesting Year 1 benefits under this part must certify to the accuracy of the information provided in their application for benefits. All information provided is subject to verification by FSA. Refusal to allow FSA or any

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other agency of the Department of Agriculture to verify any information provided will result in a determination of ineligibility. Data furnished by the applicant will be used to determine eligibility for program benefits. Furnishing the data is voluntary; however, without it, program benefits will not be approved. Providing a false certification may result in additional civil and criminal sanctions.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, payments will not be made under this section for the acquisition of rams to the extent that any such purchase, at any time during Year 1, created, or help create, a ratio of rams to ewes for the operation that was less than 1 ram to 15 ewes. However, the limitation on payments provided for in the preceding sentence shall not apply to the extent that the operation establishes to the satisfaction of the FSA County Office Committee that a lower ratio of rams to ewes is customary for the operation for breeding purposes.

§ 784.5 Year 1 eligibility.

(a) To be eligible to receive the Year 1 payments under this part, as described in § 784.1, at the rates provided in § 784.6, a sheep and lamb operation must:

(1) Be engaged in the business of producing and marketing agricultural products at the time of filing the application;

(2) Have in 1999 gross annual revenue of \$2.5 million or less; and

(3) During Year 1,

(i) Purchased rams for breeding purposes within that operation, provided that such rams must have been at least 90 days of age when purchased and must have been, or will be, maintained by the operation for at least 90 days continuously after the date of purchase; or

(ii) Enrolled sheep in an eligible sheep improvement program; or

(iii) Made sheep and lamb operation facility improvements with respect to their operation.

(b) To be eligible for payments for facility improvements made under paragraph (a)(3)(iii) of this section, the sheep and lamb operation must do the following: